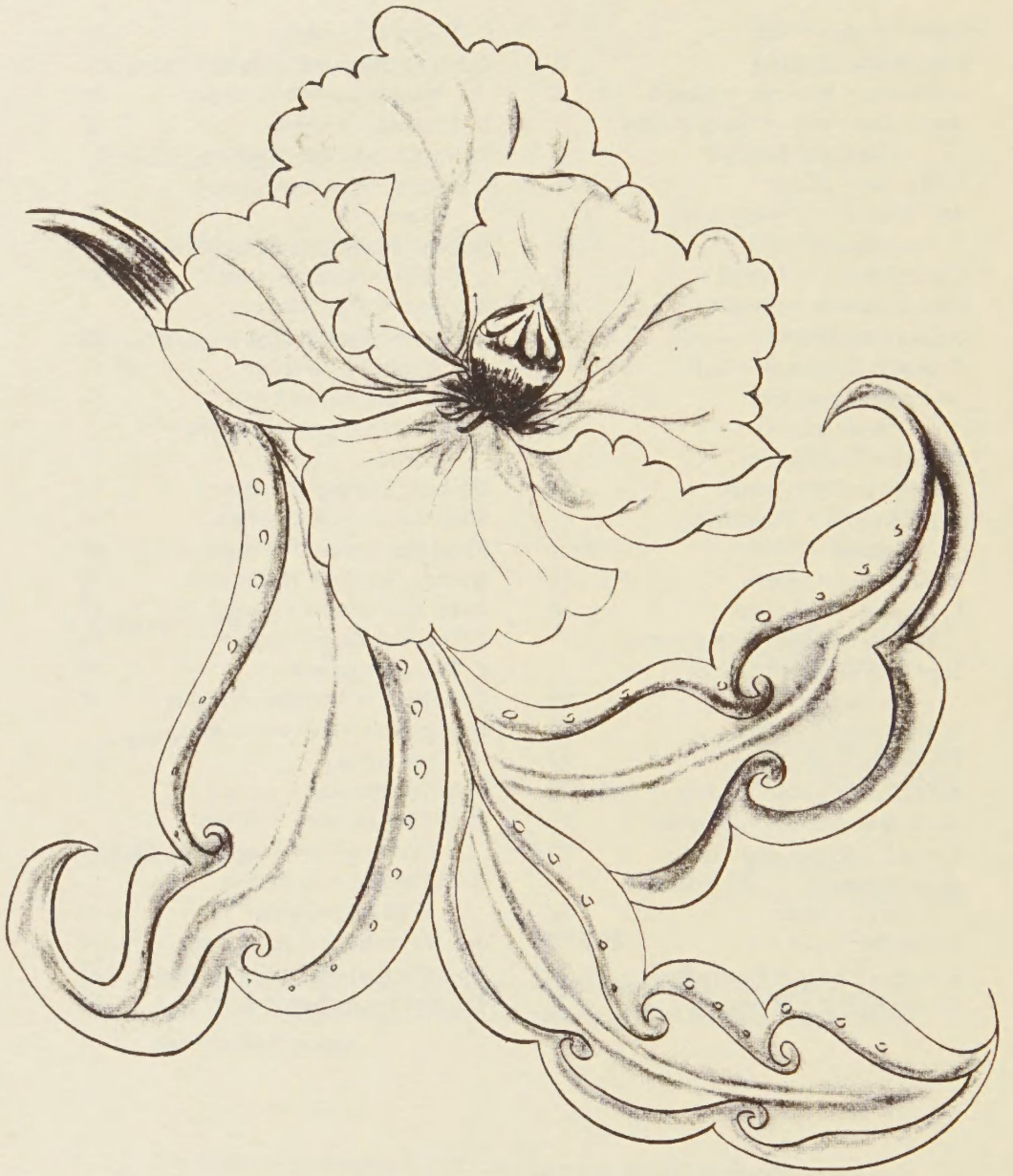




RAIN '83



INSIDE

In the vast regions of
 outer space,
there is a hole.
Inside the hole, the sky
 seems to go on forever.
 There are wild flowers blooming in
 a meadow.
 Yet,
 one delicate red rose seems
 more eye-catching than the rest.
Inside the rose is an angry fire.
The fire contains a beautiful woman,
 wearing a black lace dress.
 Off in the horizon,
 there is a hurricane coming.
She screams, as if to warn
 us to run.
But then the hole closes up,
 and
 nothing
 can be
 seen.

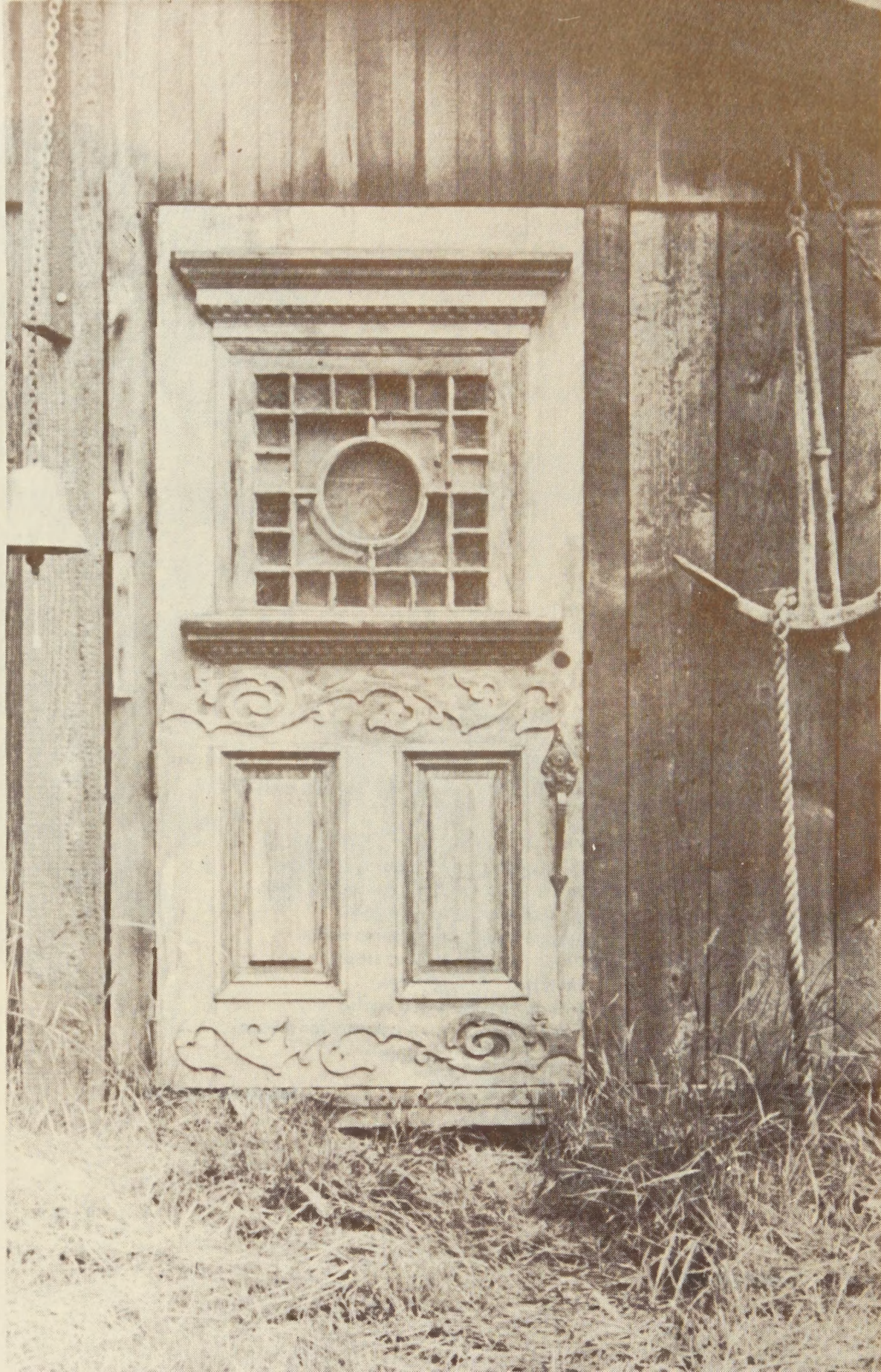
Kim Pence



DOES IT RAIN IN NASELLE, BUDDY ?

Oh to see a gentle shower,
We've got drops that make you cower.
On and on the rain just pelts,
Hard enough to raise some welts.
Day in, day out it never stops,
I'm talkin' big, big drops.
This rain's got me in a sizzle,
Some pray for sun — we pray for drizzle.

Norm Osterman



TOMMY AND GRANDPA

"Tommy, your grandfather wants to talk with you," the doctor said when he came out of the hallway that led to the bedrooms. "Now remember son, he's very tired, so don't let him talk too much."

Tommy, who was swinging his legs back and forth, stopped them. The rest of his family, as well as the cousins, who were in the old fashioned sitting room, watched as his mother gave him a little shove to get him started.

He'd never been in that room. It was something Grandpa had never allowed before, and he was even more bewildered by the tangle of tubes that led to the pitifully small mound in the center of the large four poster bed. The nurse gave him a disapproving look, disliking the idea of a child in a sick room on principle. Tommy didn't notice because all his attention was focused on his grandpa, the body so shriveled that he found it hard to believe that it belonged to the same person who had been horseback riding with him just four months before. It was all so confusing.

Grandpa tried to talk, but he could only mouth the words. He tried wetting his lips but his tongue held no moisture. Tommy helped him to drink from a glass of water he brought from the old oak nightstand that was next to the bed.

"I've wanted to give something to you," the old man was able to finally say in a dry voice, like the wind in autumn branches, "but it never seemed like a good time till now. It's in the top drawer of the stand here."

Tommy slid open the drawer and there, sitting by itself, was a belt buckle, old and badly worn but the embossing of a rearing horse could still be made out on it.

"Do you know what that is?"

"It's your belt buckle, Grandpa. I've seen you wear it all the time."

"It was my father's and his father's before that. It would have been your father's if the war hadn't of got him. Now it's yours." He paused, gathering his strength. "You hear of Bucephalus, boy?"

The nurse jumped in before Tommy could say anything. "Now Mr. Morgan you know the doctor warned you about trying to talk to . . ."

"Shut up woman! I've lived till now without your interference and I'll continue to live without your interference!" Now that was more like the grandpa Tommy remembered. Grandpa made limp movements with his right hand, and Tommy brought the glass to his lips. "Ever hear of Bucephalus?" Grandpa asked again.

"No, Grandpa, what is it?"

"A horse, boy. A father of horses." With pauses for breath and water Grandpa continued. "As my father told it when he gave me the buckle. . . Philip was King of Greece and every feast day his people and the rulers of other kingdoms would send gifts. . . One such gift was a young stallion named Bucephalus, blacker than the firmament in which the stars were set and wilder than the storm wind he was named after. . ." The old man paused and indicated with his hand he wanted more water. After Tommy gave it to him he continued.

"Philip could tell by the way Bucephalus pranced and strutted that he would be a fit mount for a king so he ordered a saddle to be brought forth. When Bucephalus was trapped out befitting a king's charger, Philip mounted, only to be thrown into the dust . . .

"A hush fell over the guests as Philip arose from the dirt, his face disfigured with rage. 'The horse is unridable, destroy it,' he screamed . . . As a royal guard rushed forward with a drawn sword a young voice called out, 'Stop, I can ride that horse . . . ' The soldier looked inquiringly at the king because the voice belonged to the young prince Alexander, who was about your age. . . yes. . . just your age. . ." The told man paused.

"Something in Alexander's voice and manner delighted Philip, who said, 'If you can ride him, he's yours . . . ' Alexander jumped full into the saddle, digging both hands into the horse's mane . . . Bucephalus reared and kicked and jumped the courtyard gate and ran on down the road. . ." Again the old man paused. After a minute he continued.

"They flew along the road . . . jumped the fence and on through the fields and on to the sea. The wind roared in Alexander's ears, closing his eyes with moisture . . . They jumped another fence and ran along the beach . . . playing with the wave line. Bucephalus and Alexander had reached an understanding . . .

"When they returned to the palace, Philip asked if Alexander had learned anything. . . Alexander said that when you mount a horse you have to hang on and ride. . ." The old man grasped the boy's hand.

"Remember, life is like that horse Bucephalus. You have to hang on and ride, ride for all it's worth."

"Really, Mr. Morgan. I insist that you get your rest now," the nurse said as she hurried Tommy out the door, closing it firmly behind him.

Tommy had barely rejoined his family when the nurse had the door open calling for the doctor. Tommy sat there, his hands tightly wrapped around the buckle while repeating over and over again, "Ride it, Grandpa, ride it."

Robert Behlke



Carla Stanley

ASTORIA

in the old part
the houses face the street
so that
often only small windows
face the harbor
bathroom
bedroom windows
as if it were something
private

Harold Bowes



Nancy Carruthers

GILLNETTING ON THE COLUMBIA

The pink streaked night sky hangs motionless above the river that slowly
ebbs past sandbars into the churning ocean
Slender grey clouds rest on the horizon at river's end
Silhouetted hills frame the river with lights from houses blinking
as sentinels at its edge
Closely tethered buoys bob to and fro

Gillnet boats that dot the water, anxious for the urgent tug at
the net, linger languidly in the gentle current
Ribbons of small white floats track the nets as they meander through
the murky water
Greetings and tales of the catch and snagged nets are heard above the
slapping of the water as boats randomly slip close to one another
They are all good fishermen, but some reel in their nets — and nothing
Others reap one or two salmon that are hanging by their gills from the net
A lone steelhead, already dead, is returned to the river; it's the law
The season is short and precious
The boats move with the current as the nets are set for another drift

Kathleen Christenson



Don Thornton



TWO FINE PEOPLE

"Do you dry from the bottom up or the up down?"

He answered carefully, sensing that she was trying to find points to be contrary upon, probably because of some article or column. He said:

"From the up down."

"Oh I knew it. Practical, practical."

"Well how do you do it then?" he asked, the thick lather rinsing down his body. She pulled open the shower curtain a little and smoothed his wet back and traced the way the soap ran further down.

"I go bottom up," she said.

"What's the advantage then? The parts you dry get dripped on from above."

"Yes, that's true, but the floor stays dry."

"I stand in the tub when I dry," he replied smugly.

"Oh," she said, thinking. And then, "Yes, that's a good idea."

When he was dry they went to bed. He smelled clean and felt warm and good. She rubbed up close and tried to hold off the love making as long as she could, but he was insistent and it was all over too quickly. Afterwards, the late afternoon light filtered in through the thin curtains. The light made her feel secretive, lying there in the big bed. She lay close and still and he began talking. He talked because he felt melancholy. Lately, he felt melancholy after making love.

"After I succeed I am going to buy a little house in the town where my Dad lives."

She listened, having heard the stories before in different variations, but she was not bored. She believed some of them and thought he really would be successful. She kept quiet and he continued.

"It's a logging town. I'll get an old pickup and a nice car. You can drive the car of course, and I'll use the pickup to haul firewood. Dad and I will do that together. We'll cut three loads every Saturday. Two loads will be for Dad and one load will be for us."

"Mmmmm. Fresh cut wood smells so pretty," she whispered.

"Yes it does," he answered and went on, "then when winter comes we will all have enough wood. We will be warm and able to read books and listen to music in front of a good, hot fire. Won't that be great?"

He tugged at her chin as he always did when his stories were over and interrupted her answer, as always, with a long, hot kiss. She squirmed and mouthed the words through his lips.

"I-think-you- will be fine," she managed.

Then he wrapped her up close in his arms and legs and soon she heard him breathing slow and rhythmically. She worked herself free and propped up on one elbow above him. She wondered about this man-boy lying so innocent and virginal beside her. "What will be left of you when you do make it," she thought, "and what will be left of us? What will be left of me?" She thought that way more and more now, wondering about herself, checking on herself each time he boasted a new victory. "Am I all right still?" she had asked him one night; he had said, "Yes you are and I love you," which had made her feel very secure. But, the next morning the doubts had returned. That morning she had cried and questioned herself, "Will I contribute anything or will I just be all right-still?" Then when the crying had stopped, something new entered her mind. An awareness of betrayal pecked away at her. No, not her betrayal of him, but rather, his betrayal of her. She began to question her thoughts again: "Surely, he wouldn't hurt me? Why would he try to hold me down?" She tried desperately to dismiss the feeling, the suspicion, but it remained, nagging, persistent. And suddenly, she began to see in vivid, jealous hues. Her art class: "Too frivolous." Her exercise group: "You could do the same thing at home." Her desire to handle the checkbook, or to at least see where all the money went: "Nothing to concern herself over." A mountain of evidence seemed to grow from a molehill of subjugation. There was her half-finished college degree, her postponed job hunting, her signed-over trust fund; she marvelled at how much she had let slide. He had been away on business that morning and not being able to check her rising anger, her *indignation*, she had called *long distance*, "just missing him" here and preceding him (We're expecting him any time now.") there. Finally, she had slammed the receiver down and sadly, tearfully, drunk herself to sleep.

Now, this night in bed she intended to confront it again. She whispered above him, his beautiful, boyish face not acknowledging.

"I will leave if I have to you know." She said it again, listening, cautiously evaluating the reactions within her soul.

"I will leave if I have to." She grew bolder and felt right about it.

"No matter how successful you become, it's for you, you, not me. I'm going to stick together. You wait and see. I'm going to make it for me. You won't swallow me up. No you won't. Not me."

She stopped, a little shaken, but giddy and happy. She laid down close against his back. He felt smooth against her legs. Finally, she sat back up and lifted the covers, looking for a long time at his curled, naked body. She couldn't contain the giggle that welled up from deep inside her as she gently dropped the covers and laid back down.

The next morning was a Saturday and she slept in. A wild storm railed outside and she woke up once and hearing the rain and wind, smiled and pulled the warm covers back up over her head. Later, when the door slammed, she woke up again. She hopped out of bed and looked down the road

towards the ocean. The spray was visible over the dunes and the rain rattled against the window of the apartment. She watched him running into the wind, a dark blue sweatsuit, leaning, struggling down the road. She watched him disappear over the first dune.

"Crazy man, my sweet, stupid, crazy man," she said to herself. Later she jogged out and met him on the beach. They were both breathing hard.

"Are you nuts?" he yelled.

"Why?" she screamed back, trying to be heard over the wind. She pulled down on her stocking cap to keep from losing it.

"This is no weather for you!"

"Don't baby me, you bastard!" He looked at her a moment, her slender figure being jostled by the wind. Then he smiled.

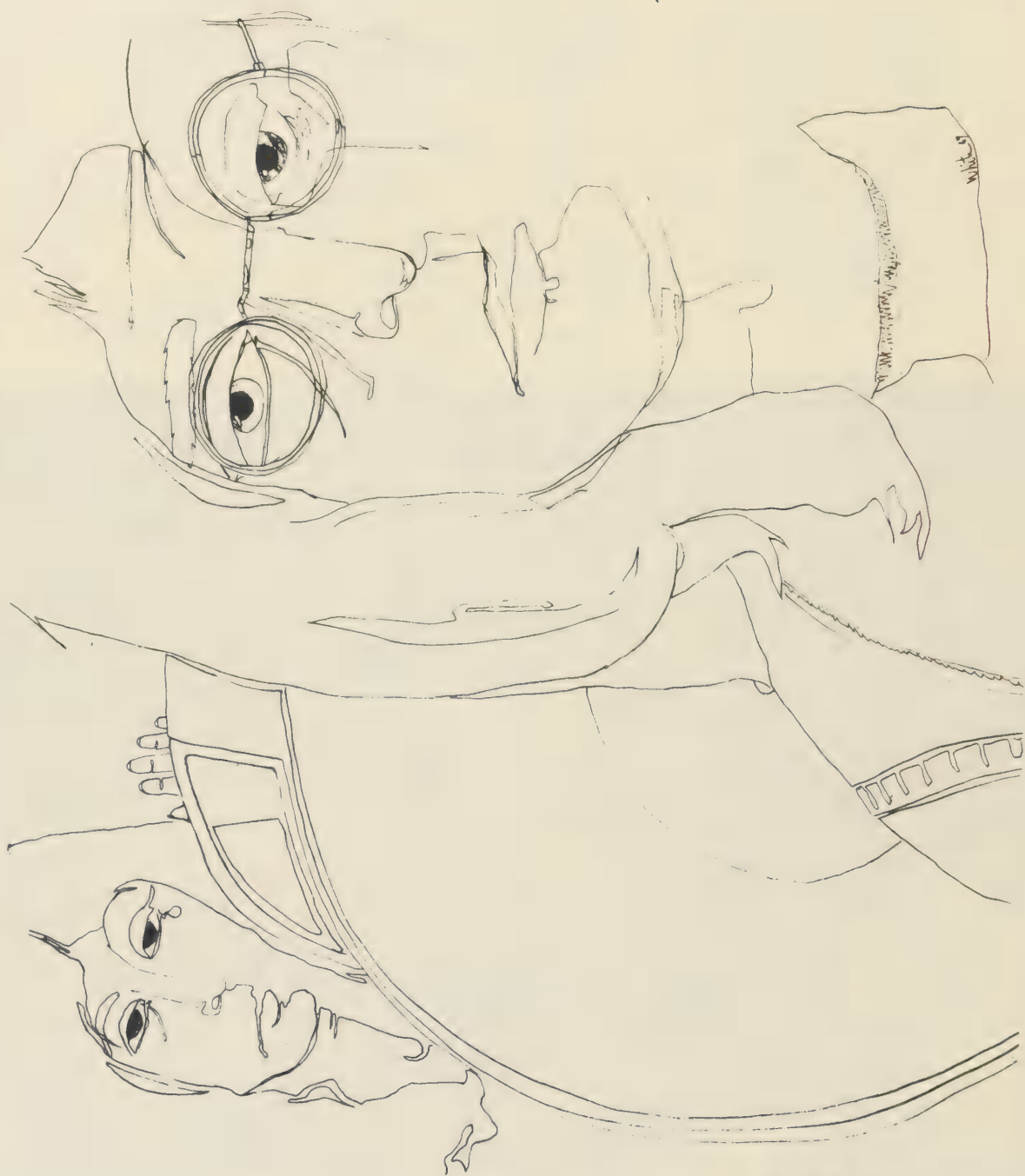
"Okay?" she said.

"Okay," he said. Then they ran back to the apartment.

Steven Raistakka



Brian Harrison



Lisa Wynne

THE COAT

Some sheep gave his life for you
and I found a friend.
Together we traveled the golden coast
and sang the sixties songs.
My people went north, San Francisco gypsy camp,
The Grateful Dead sang lullabies
and I wore velvet gowns.
Big Sur called, I went.
We gathered wood for tipi fires,
boiled rice and drugs.
We lived it all, you and I,
the mystical gypsie's life.
Silver bracelets, gaudy clothes,
tarot on Persian rugs.

I married; a charmer of snakes,
silver-tongued rake,
he beguiled the child in me.
Four years turned into eternity,
I longed for a sprouting of wings.
Lying, stealing, refusing to grow,
you stayed his knife when he wouldn't let go.
And when I was caught by mere circumstance,
in a Volkswagen van turned boxing arena,
dodgeing a left and ducking a right.
The van doors slid open and into the night,
I, flew, rolling and tumbling yard after yard,
wrapped in your fleece, the fall wasn't so hard.
Now, when the coat that's kept in my closet,
is brought out and worn,
nostalgia of campfires, Garcia and whim
embrace the hide and the one within.
Those days gone by of singing and sinning
of boots and baubles, of near escapes,
manifest in a moment, the fact I'm alive
I was meant to continue, I had to survive.

BEACHCOMBING

Cool ocean breezes so clean,
Sand dry and fluffy, wet and crusty.
Tide line littered with debris,
Precious or useless, items valued.
Scavengers of the ocean's bounty,
Some wearing feathers, some who are human.
Flying along the edge, or prowling in strange mechanical conveyances;
Stopping here and there, shopping for the treasures
Provided by the sea.

Lee Lani Williamson



Brian Harrison



Lisa Wynne

DIXIE

If you've ever moved from far away to live in Astoria, you know something about the adjustment difficulties. Such was the case with my mother and father. In 1943, they were twenty-one years old and it was war-time. They were seeking their fortune like everyone else, and they found a promising ad in a Dallas, Texas, newspaper. In nine days they had sold all their large possessions and begun the move to the Northwest. Getting rid of their stuff wasn't a problem because the most valuable thing they owned was a flock of chickens. Within a week, they had jobs in a Vancouver, Washington, shipyard that paid a fantastic wage: ninety cents an hour.

The area of the deep South my parents grew up in wasn't Longhorn and cowboy country. By way of comparison, it was Huckleberry Finn country. When it rained there, it began suddenly, fell hard, then stopped just as suddenly and the sun came out. Here, they found the weather wasn't so cooperative. Mom stayed in most of a winter before she realized the rain wasn't going to stop and the sun wasn't coming out.

It had been Depression time and the people of the South were hard hit by it, but the enterprising Southerner never went hungry. He or she picked a little polk salad and set off in search of a meaty squirrel or possum for the pot. I still have the shotgun my father used to hunt many a meal when he was a boy. It has a Browning stock and a Remington barrel, vintage 1912. Firearms made then didn't always have the smoothest action. This one was reputed to have the kick of a Kentucky mule. Daddy still demonstrates how he stood on a slippery log in the middle of a stream to aim at a squirrel high on a limb above him.

Naturally, with these hunting skills behind him, Daddy had to give it a whirl in Oregon. He was perhaps the first Southerner to find that dining on Oregon squirrel gives a person the GI trots as no other delicacy can.

The next year, Daddy was drafted into the Navy. He was stationed at Tongue Point and so Mom and Dad came to Astoria at last. If it wasn't enough to have a last name like Oakley and be from the South, it certainly was enough to eat weird food and not be a Finn. It was enough to make any native Astorian intensely suspicious of your character.

They hadn't been here more than a few years when the old hunting urge seized Daddy and he took to the hills back of the house. It didn't matter to him that it was more rain forest vegetation than Texas ground cover. Never mind that it always rained on hunters and the underbrush was continually wet. He had the fever. He left a few markers to show his path and rambled freely until it began to get dark. His landmarks all looked alike and he had no idea where he was. He spent the night in a hollow log and covered up with a few spruce needles for warmth. In the morning, he found that he wasn't far from the house. With clothes and boots soaked, his felt hat molded to his head, he started toward the house. Our fox terrier took one look at him and rushed, growling and barking. He couldn't set foot in the yard

until the dog recognized his voice.

I was still very young when I realized that the neighbors were never going to get used to us. We still occasionally ate black-eyed peas, turnip greens, grits and cornbread interspersed with the seafood Mom and Dad had learned to love. That the neighbors thought we were Bohemian was a foregone conclusion. I think that was a fifties term for weirdos.

When I was about five years old, the people up the road who raised sheep were having trouble with bear killing their lambs. They kept a close watch on the flock and one night they killed a bear of some size. They brought it down to us and inquired whether we would like to have it to butcher. We were delighted. The meat was fairly good. A short time later, we were amused to hear through the grapevine that if you had any strange food you wanted to get rid of, to bring it to us. Those Oakleys would eat anything.

So, if you've had trouble getting on in Astoria and figured you never would because you weren't Scandinavian or a Paul Bunyan type, you're probably right. Perhaps you never will. I'm a native Astorian, but I've been lucky to get the best of both worlds. I eat petrale sole, braided bread and blackeyed peas. I like schottisches and waltzes, but when I hear "The Devil Went Down to Georgia" and my blood pressure goes up, I know its just the South in my blood. So, if you're a foreigner in Astoria, don't compromise your style. Give a little Dixie to a Finn.

Ruth Christiansen

ASTORIA

Changes
are so hard
maybe that's why
you've stayed the
same
and I had to leave
to pursue the
bigger things
in life

and now I look back
and see a peace there. . .
a peace maybe I
once knew too

but ran from
because I wanted to
change.

But changes are
so hard.

Mickey Bambrick



IN MARION'S GREEN CHAIR

No one sits as still as she
Whose face suggests an
Antique sensibility

Her lace is old, of course, and
Pressed awry in just the way
You knew that it would be.

One eye stares slightly down
Into the feeling quadrant
Kinesthetically.

Funny how between the two
You only notice one.
That one, the other one, over there,

Seeing something I don't see
But sense is there, inside,
Between the lines of what is real.

She sits and sits and sits and sits
And sits
 and sits
 and sits.

I moved her yesterday and now I am afraid.

Alan C. Batchelder



Carla Stanley

PETROGLYPH

Among the rocks
The high and dusty rocks
Where the thirsty sun beats down
A man is climbing
 running
 dodging

There in the lair of snake and scorpion
Where hunger is ever watchful
And sudden death stoops upon the careless
A moment's inattention and one is food
It is the law

Here a man has come for justice
To judge and to be judged
To dine
And to become food
Here beneath the thirsty sun

Watch and listen as he climbs now:
Sudden shadow; a glint of something shiny (Ah,
 that is a man, yes)

A scrape, ■ grunt, ■ scuff
A small offering to the resident spirits:
 ■ patch of skin, a drop of blood
And still he goes
Now creeping inch by inch
Now leaping loftily
Onward and pausing and onward again

What a man will do for justice
To eat
And to be eaten
Ah, but then why not?
If the universe has ■ purpose
Perhaps it's known only to those who willingly
 risk being a little foolish
For something they feel

This man has come for justice
And after all
He is sure to find it in the end
One way or another

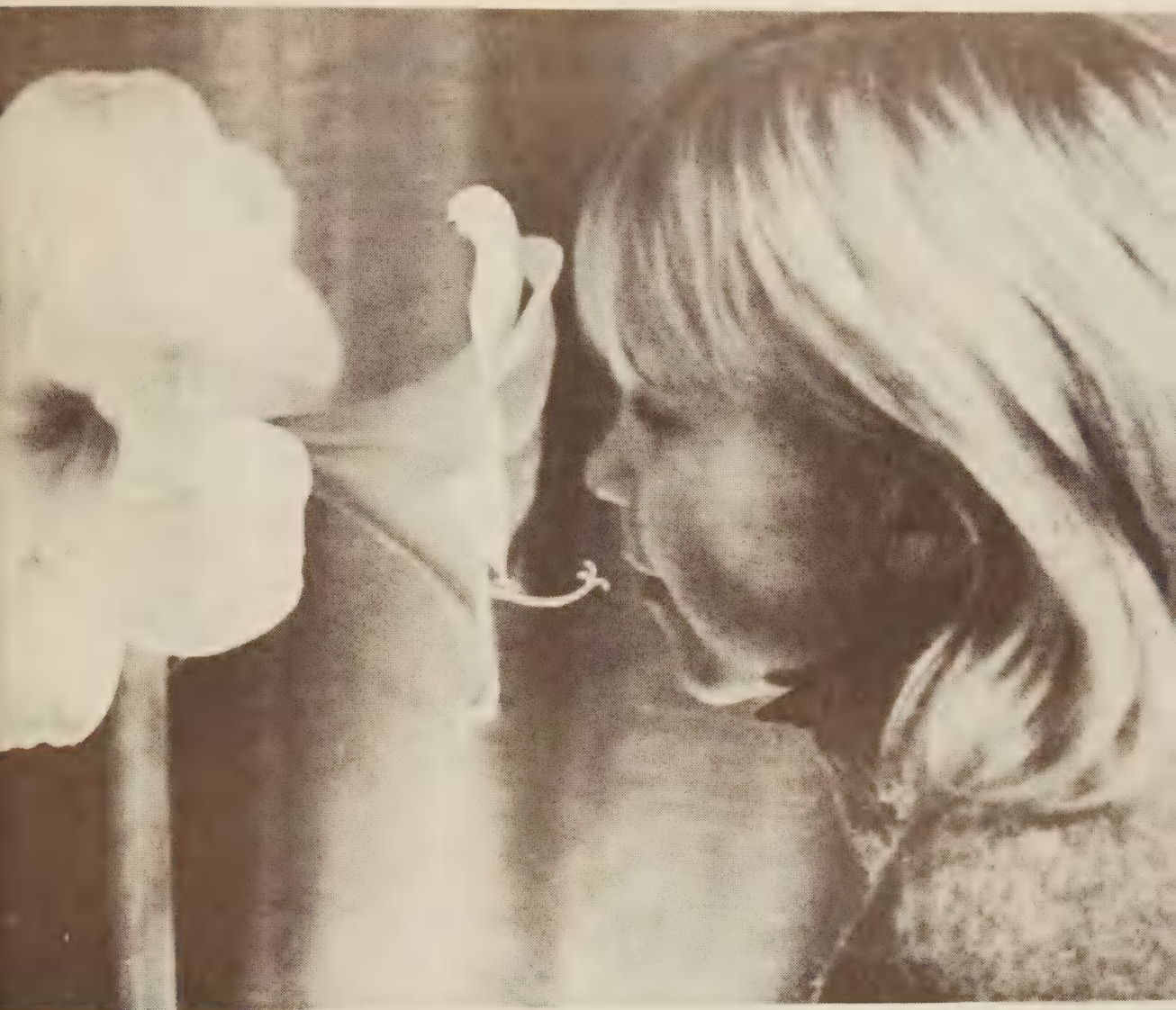


Soft winds of May;
a drift of dogwood petals,
edges the lane.

Helen C. Acton

Crest of the hill,
a gust of summer wind
steals my hat.

Helen C. Acton



Don Thornton

ODE TO WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL

Two friends whom I will call Mrs. Cool Whimsy, and Mrs. Win Dignant are neighbors in a lovely secluded woodsy spot overlooking the beautiful blue Pacific Ocean. Their lovely well kept yards lush with sweeping green lawns, flowers and shrubs are a tempting smorgasbord for invading 'coon and deer seeking food.

These enchanting invaders from outer forest are indeed a problem. Mrs. Cool Whimsy, whose heart melts at the sight of a motherly doe and her appealing fawn, manages to keep her "cool" in spite of some destruction, but Mrs. Win Dignant, frantic over the deer and 'coon nibbling in her Shangri-la dripping with fuchsia blooms, dashes out into her yard any hour of the night or early in the pearly dawn, loudly ringing an old cow bell. The startled intruders swiftly depart from the green velvet eden and the neighbors are once more awakened from black velvet slumber.

Says sleepy Mrs. Whimsy to sleepy Mr. Whimsy, sighing deeply, "There's Winchester Cathedral ringing her bell again!"

Then one morning after THE BELL had pealed forth before daybreak, Mrs. Cool Whimsy, whose patience was getting shaky, lingered at the table after breakfast and went creative to relieve her feelings in an ode to her friend. She enjoyed writing the ode, even her friend had to smile at the "Stratford-On-Avon" style, and I enjoyed it so much I feel it should be shared. By the way this is not make-believe, it is a true account.

Ode To Winchester Cathedral

By E.B. alias Mrs. Cool Whimsy

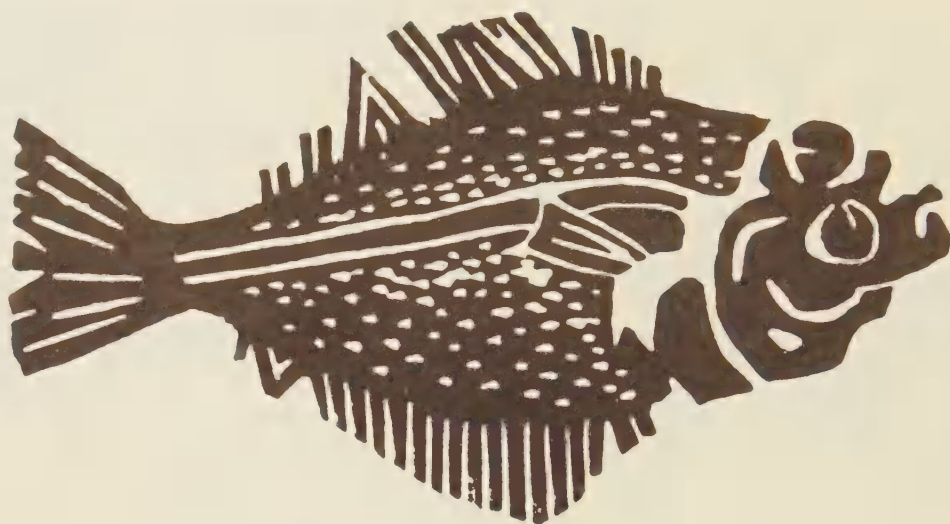
Old bell, disturb not the repose
Of those who, in slumber sweet
Seek surcease of day's woes
And, from life's cares, retreat.

But if, on some misty dawn
Startled from gentle dream
I hear thy clang'rous tongue
'companied by raucous shout
Of this, I pray thee, have no doubt
I'll cut thy clapper out!

Clara O. Anderson



Don Thornton



Kathleen Christensen

ODE TO A GOOD TIME

Persimmon delights under opulent moon,
senses race before us.
How brief we taste and oft in haste
breathe life's spice amporous.
Heart's vale grows lush, oh gardner tend
fecund boughs that bend and
pluck the temperance weed unkind
that crowds and chokes amplectant vine.

Cinnamon sparks break emerald light,
love makes all men drunkards.
They dance to music's joyous bliss and
ache for lover's absent kiss,
until the crow that wakes the yard
warns imbibed, now sleeping hard,
it's up and greet the coming day,
work is jealous now of play.

Midnight memories breakfast alone.
Life's spice per chance too heady?
Primrose oil* now kisses the lips
of lovers that step unsteady.
They harvest the fruit, so playfully planted
in song and lightness of feet,
though now, they all vow
through the throb in their heads
the night they'll never repeat.
Yet — after a week of sober correction
look forward to pleasure's full resurrection.

Lisa Wynne

COAST TOWN

The red and yellow wheels
have ceased turning, screeching.
The shore pines
flail their crooked arms
to shake the summer baubles
from their hair.
Gnarled old spruce nod
as the rain starts to smash
hard against flesh.
The crashing crescendo
of the surf
drowns memories
of raucous street sounds.
Gaunt old cormorants
and chattering gulls
button up their windbreakers,
and rush out to welcome the prodigal,
the October gale.

Dorothy Pushee Kiviaho



Lisa Wynne

FIRST VISITOR: FATHER AND SON

Glad to see you dad are you feeling O.K.
How's the food
And are the nurses treating you real good
Oh, I know it's been a while since I came to see you
But both the kids were sick
The office car broke down
And I know that you know what it is like
When you've got a family
When you've got a business
Some times I guess I really just get wrapped up in my life
(Why can't I say I love you)

Glad to see you son are you feeling O.K.
How's the wife
And has the world been treating you real good
Oh, I know it's been a while since you came to see me
I wondered how you were
It's been a lonely while
I don't think that you can know what it's like
When you've got no family
When you've got no business
Sometimes I wish that I could just get wrapped up in my life
(Why can't I say I love you)

Bill Honi

THE THIEF

Empty walls, silent rooms, empty halls, filled with gloom.
No living souls these floors, have tread, for centuries old,
silent dead.

A burst of noise, flooding light, a door crumbled inward,
behold the sight.

A tall warrior blocked the light, sword in hand, ready
to fight.

A thief has come from a land to the east, braving
desert, forest and beast.

Slowly he looked about the room, icy eyes pierced
the gloom.

With caution bred from a barbaric race, he stepped
inside and scanned the place.

The hair stood at the back of his neck, he growled
deeply, his motion in check.

His gut tightened, his nerves tensed, he turned to leave,
to free his sense.

Then the tales he'd heard, the legends and fables,
stopped him again, made him able.

Able to turn away from the light, to step back inside,
prepared to fight

As he silently crept down the hall, ancient
legends he began to recall

Of gold and silver, precious stones, protected here
by an army's bones.

A wizard's spirit was said to walk, to drive
men insane with ghostly talk,

To melt the flesh from a man's frame, imprison his soul,
rot his brain,

To force his bones to protect this palace, to meet intruder
with deadly malice.

As he stalked these ancient hallowed halls,
rotting tapestry clinging to walls,
Explorsing vast chambers with pantherish gait,
tempting the odds, daring faith,
Scraping behind him he heard the dull clank of
metal, half whispered words.
Sense alert he came to a door, bound in bronze,
ceiling to floor.
He stood and stared in awe, humbled by the
things he saw—
Intricate carvings decorated the door, held him mesmerized,
rooted to the floor;
Demons from hell, horrid night flying beasts,
defilement of virgins, cannibalistic feasts;
Behind him the shuffle of sandal, then to his right,
the glow of a candle.
Soldiers appeared, menacing and grim, muttering oaths
they advanced on him.

Like a wolf he squared to meet their attack
feet planted firm, door to his back.
As they drew closer, into better light, his soul was shaken
by a gruesome sight—
Skeletal hands clutching swords high, red fire burning
in their empty eyes.

Drawing a breath he leapt into the fight, striking the first
with deadly might.
Ducking a blow that came from the right, gutting the soldier,
he checked the fight.
The warriors he'd smitten lay crumbled to dust,
ancient armor broken, covered with rust.
With renewed hope he struck again, another crumbled,
he just might win,
Never stopping, always in motion, dealing death,
raising commotion.
Leaping to the door, he burst inside, the soldiers behind him,
after his hide.

On a high platform in the center of the room, surrounded by wealth,
stood a figure of gloom.

A ghostly laughter filled the room, the soldiers froze,
then the voice of doom.

"Welcome thief," the specter cried, "by now all other
men have died.

For a thousand years I've waited for you, a warrior strong,
my bidding to do."

As the specter spoke it started to float, covered the warrior,
strangled his throat.

As his mouth opened in silent fears, wisps of smoke
entered his ears.

Numbing cold entered his frame, chilling death
overtook his brain.

A burst of noise, flooding light, a door crumbled inward,
behold the sight.

Another thief from a distant land, stepped inside,
sword in hand.

There before him in the dim light stood a great warrior,
ready to fight.

Vacant eyes, hollow and dead, filled with horror,
death and dread,

Another thief joined the dead.

D.J. Riggs



Nancy Carruthers



Lisa Wynne

PERSONA

It seems like we're all running a scam
Because we're all afraid to let the world see
and touch who and what we really are
So we create a scam
And we hang on to it because it's the only thing
we can make
The only thing that seems to be able to survive
and have substance in a world gone mad

But inside we know
We know that this thing that walks the world in
our body
That addresses the world in our name
That lives in our house
That eats our food
That fucks our wife
Is not us
And inside there is someone who wants to cry
But cannot find a voice

Michael Emrys

We are the benefactors
Of modern radical surgery.
We spend our lives discovering
What parts we have lost.

People without hearts
Still yearn for love,
As people without legs
Feel itching in their toes.

People whose souls have died,
Atrophied, then dropped,
Lopped, like ears, away,
Still remember God, sometimes,
And even pray.

Ellen Shannon



Reed Mortansan

NAMELESS

The ancient animal in us looks askance at love
And justly so, for that's a flame once kindled
Ceases not and endures nothing less pure than itself
All falsity, all pretence, all the things weak hands
 contrive
All the things we take poor comfort in
Stand silent now, empty and cold
While love itself, a living, dancing flame, burns on
Lonely survivor of its own pyre arising anew
And in dominion of its own simple glory: the tender heart

Who would grovel in the dust of fallen empires for
 trinkets
To wear in gaudy imitation of what is gone and well forgotten?
For in the living flame of life we are reborn
Every precious instant from the heart unfolding freely
Like a kiss upon the wind

Michael Emrys



GROUNDBURST

I scream from the hole where I slept so long
Towards where my target lies
I know no hate, no right, no wrong
In my steel coffin I cross the skies
To fall on those below
When I touch down the city dies
The people will die and they'll never know
No time to hide or run
And nowhere to run even so
My flight to destruction finally done
I touch the sleeping Earth
And I awake to be the sun

Bill Honi



OLD MAN MINGUS

In my youth I was raised with the knowledge that all things lived and shared the same language. One only had to open his ears, not just the ears of his body but of his spirit as well. The trees spoke; the sun spoke; yes, even the earth spoke.

My family and I lived on Mingus Mountain, a place tucked away in the northwest corner of Arizona. From our front porch we had a spectacular panoramic view of the desert. To the east of our home was Sugar Loaf Mountain. In my young eyes Sugar Loaf had the appearance of a woman's head and upper body, and Mingus Mountain had the appearance of a man's face with a beard. I spent many a delightful hour combing the beard of "Old Man Mingus," searching for arrow heads and Indian Pottery. Customarily I was awake before anyone else. I would quietly slip on my cut-off levis and moccasins. Tiptoeing through the house, trying to avoid the planks I knew would protest the most, finally I would reach my goal, the porch. There I would await the rising sun.

The morning of my eighth birthday was different. It had a special feeling to it. More than just my birthday feeling. In my soul was great expectation. Something very deep inside me began to awaken. Something important was happening, and somehow I was being caught up with it.

I gazed upon Sugar Loaf. My heart quickened, and my flesh tingled. The rising sun began to clothe Sugar Loaf Mountain. Along her crest and down her shoulders rippled blue velvets, blending with the darker purples at her sides. The silhouette of her face was silver lined, in sharp contrast to a fanning, silent explosion of liquid gold, twisting in rhythm to the singing clouds above her head and crown.

Then lace of silver, reds and violets, waltzed in abstract designs down her breasts. In awe I stood, seeing her incased in living crystal. From the midst of the chorus of rays behind her, a single beam shot forth, splashing across the face of "Old Man Mingus." His face and beard burst into flames, awakening this slumbering giant in whose lap I now stood.

As I witnessed the marriage of these two titans, I could sense their ages-long language, deeply rumbling across the canyons . . . one to another.

Tears of wonder and joy burned my eyes. How fleeting must the lives of man be . . . to such as these.

Carl Dunn

PICTURE AT AN EXHIBITION

And a solitude of age drifts and settles
Over sensible shoes with cracked soles,
Frayed laces and turned down hose
Over varicosed calves.
Flab-armed sagged torso draped
Over a used cane with a gray end
And a deep weathered gouge.

And thin yellowed hair barely
Shades a skull filled with a
Stinging premonition of extinction.
And a solitude of age drifts and settles
Over a feast of time.

Brian Harrison



WHILE PLANTING YEW TREE

A few weeks ago, my mother decided to remove the yew tree growing by the corner of her house. It had begun to grow into the foundation and break the cement of the house. The tree was more than forty years old and had reached the height of the eaves, perhaps twenty feet. Mom and I dug around the roots to loosen the tree. After all our labors, a neighbor was still barely able to pull it out with his tractor, such was the depth of its roots.

I had lived in that house all my life until I was eighteen years old and I could not conceive of the house without the yew tree. It seemed as much a part of the house as the windows or the walls. I was determined to replant it where it could not harm anything and could grow as large as it liked. There was nowhere to plant the tree without endangering something else in the flowers and garden part of the property. So, it seemed that the only place was across the road in a grassy spot where elderberry bushes and blackberry vines threatened to take over. The yew tree would appear out of place there but could grow very large and tall without detriment to any plant or building.

The day after the tree was removed was a Sunday and I didn't get started hole digging until late in the afternoon. The soil was soft and the digging went fast until the hole was about two feet deep. Mom drove me home and I promised to be back the next day to finish up. At home, Lane had nicknamed my efforts "the yew-hole."

The next morning I had a little trouble getting started digging. I knitted and had a few cups of tea. Finally, I pulled myself up by the over-all straps and went out to get busy on the yew-hole. It was roughly oval-shaped, about four feet across and five feet long. I was getting into red and gray clay that had to be loosened with the hazel hoe before it could be scooped up with the shovel. Though digging wasn't my favorite job, it was pleasant standing in the hole. The tall greenery was all around me and I could see only the tops of the cars as they passed.

When I had been hard at work for about an hour, stopping only to chat with a boy collecting bottles and to brush clay out of my hair after an enthusiastic session with the hoe, I was down to shale in the bottom of the hole. It was now about hip deep at the top end, knee deep at the lower end. I laid aside the hoe and took up the shovel. I got a heaping shovelful and was throwing it on the pile when there was a friendly nudge and a grunt at my shoulder. I threw my scoopful as I turned around. A black bear stood above me, his nose beside mine. The shovel handle touched his massive chest. The nails of one huge paw crumbled soil into the hole. "Good morning," I was sure he said, his voice very low as he exposed a double row of pointed ivories.

I popped out of the hole like the cork out of a champagne bottle. The shortest route to the basement door was through the deepest brush and grass. The shovel propelled me over a blackberry patch, the prone yew tree and last year's discarded bamboo trimmings like a vaulter's pole. I shot across the road without checking for traffic. In the driveway, I slowed up a bit to see whether the bear was following me. Above the grass, I could just see his big head turned toward me, a hurt expression on his face. Over the sound of my boots in the gravel, I fancied I heard him muse, "Now what do you suppose got into her? I just ambled up to her to say hello and find out why she was digging that little hole in my property, and she just up and took off. I never know what to say to people."

Ruth Christiansen

IN PRAISE OF BEING JELLYFISH

Oh, to be floating
In the warm, salty waters
Of a lagoon
Near Tahiti;
To have been moved through life
By the whims of trade winds and Humboldt current;
And near the end of a short life-cycle—
About to be flung limp on the sand,
Torn by corals and children—
To be thinking of nothing
But the shadows in the lagoon below
And the blue of the sky above.

David P. Moser, II



NIGHT FOG

Down in the marshes,
along the Neacoxie,
Clatsop women whisper,
gather cattails,
and remember camas.

Fog ghosts
wander through the dunes
stepping silently
in the damp grass.
Hushed grey, quiet mist
drifts through the pines,
softening the sea sounds.

Restless spirits
in blurred canoe shapes
glide soundlessly
on the Skipanon.

A gull, or hawk,
perhaps
a willow branch,
strokes my cheek
and is gone.

Dorothy Pushee Kiviah



Richard Mickelson

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